

# rhythms of the African world

**Detroit brings out the best  
of art, music, clothing and  
food to celebrate cultures**

By Rhonda Bates-Rudd | The Detroit News

**T**astes from Nigeria, sights from Senegal and sounds from Jamaica.

They'll all be on display this weekend when more than 500,000 people converge on downtown's Hart Plaza for the 17th annual African World Festival, the largest African festival in the U.S., said Ernest Duncan, festival director.

"I see the festival as a culmination of the foundation the museum has built in terms of educating the community about the African Diaspora, and it gives us an chance to expose more people to what's going on outside of the U.S.," said Ernest Duncan, the museum's interim director.

Duncan, who said the popularity of the three-day celebration of African culture and influences continues to grow, noted the museum has been flooded with out-of-state inquiries about the festival and event scheduling.

In a city of about a million people, without less than 75 percent of them African American, the festival's popularity may not be surprising. But Duncan said there's more to it than that.

"I think the entertainment is a big draw for us because we bring in African, Caribbean and Latin artists," Duncan said.

That's reflected in the official title of the event — officially called Rhythms of the African Diaspora: Culture, Spirit and Creativity. Some 150 vendors will offer authentic African sculpture, jewelry and other artifacts.

Sponsored by Ford Motor Co., DaimlerChrysler AG and General Motors Corp., the festival opens at 5 p.m. Friday and runs through Sunday, closing with a concert featuring Detroit native and jazz artist Dizzy Gillespie.

Byrd, performing in Detroit for the first time in 25 years, will highlight what vendors and organizers say will be the best festival ever, offering a mix of local, national and international entertainment appealing to all age groups.

While the festival is recognized as one of Detroit's largest annual events, native African vendors say their families and friends look forward to attending and seeing an added value, spending to vacation in Motor City during the festival weekend.

Senegalese native Amadou Sow, who has been a festival vendor for the past 10 years, will be selling a mix of imports, along with his original wood carvings, brass works and hand bags.

"The wood carvings are a tradition in my family; my father taught me, my sister and brother and brother-in-law how to carve wood at a very young age," Sow said.

"The festival for me is significant in Detroit because it brings Africans and African Americans together."

"That is why so many people travel from Africa every year to attend this event, so they can experience this coming together as one family, one blood."

"The festival is important for that reason and that reason alone," Nigeria native Daniel Moore said.

A vendor for 10 years, Senegalese native Amadou Sow creates a replica slave boat.



Daniel Moore / The Detroit News  
A vendor for 10 years, Senegalese native Amadou Sow creates a replica slave boat.



## If you go

**What:** 17th Annual African World Festival

**Where:** Hart Plaza, at the foot of Woodward in downtown Detroit

**When:** 5-11:30 p.m. Friday, noon to 11:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday

Phyllis Barah Sancho has been serving up her native African Soul Food since the festival's inception many years ago. She said she will serve 100 pounds of rice per day with her authentic cuisine.

It was Farah Sancho and other native Africans who convinced festival organizers to broaden the festival's scope from African-American to African nations.

Today, she said, "this festival is really something to brag about."

"Detroit has the best African World Festival in America, because they bring in the entrepreneurs who many Africans, such as myself, grew up with, and people come here because this may be the only chance in their life-

**Parking:** Parking and shuttles are available at the Museum of African American History. Shuttles are 50 cents and are available from noon to 6 p.m.

**Information:** (313) 494-5800.

time to see these African and Caribbean-born entrepreneurs perform," said Sancho, who runs her own catering business and is also the president of the Michigan Nigerian Association.

Sancho said she looks forward to sharing her style of cooking with African Americans because of the rave reviews she receives after they digest her culinary treats.

"The truth is Nigerians eat a lot of the same foods African-Americans eat, we just prepare them differently," she said.

"We don't boil our greens, we stir fry them. And we use palm oil and we use a lot of pepper. And we use fish as a seasoning, similar to the way Amer-

**The 17th annual African World Festival since it began, says:**

icans use salt pork," she said.

This year the women know her African greens will feature sava leaves, a green from the yam plant, which is one of the most popular roots used in cooking by different nationalities throughout the world, particularly Africans.

Detroit African American Lisa Lewis said she is still reaping benefits from her vending experience last year, and returns this year to sell batik fashions. Batik is a hand-dyed textile which originated in Indonesia.

"I exhibit throughout the conventions and wherever I can share my style of cooking with African Americans because of the rave reviews she receives after they digest her culinary treats."

"The Batik is a sarong-styled usually worn with beach wear, encourage my customers to them year-round, as well as on special occasions, such as table cloths and towels. The festival has initiated allowing customers to shop a variety of ethnic items, as well as



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# 17th Annual African World Festival

## Events Schedule

**Friday**  
**Moshi / Umole Stage**  
 5:00-5:30 p.m.: Opening ceremony  
 5:30-6:30 p.m.: Juma Santos procession and performance  
 6:30-7:00 p.m.: NZA Eugene Decouque (High Life Afro Pop)  
 7:00-7:45 p.m.: Biggie Iris, Afro Tap, David Kiron  
 8:00-8:25 p.m.: Red For Raven  
 8:30-8:55 p.m.: Ras Shiloh  
 9:00-10:00 p.m.: Maxi Priest  
 10:30-11:25 p.m.: Krosfiah  
**Saturday**  
 noon-1:30 p.m.: Caribbean jams of Joy  
 2:00-2:15 p.m.: DASHO39  
 2:15-3:00 p.m.: WLB Featured Artist  
 3:00-4:30 p.m.: The Step Show  
 4:45-5:30 p.m.: 911 Mambo  
 5:30-6:05 p.m.: OniSolo (High Life)  
 6:30-7:00 p.m.: Eshira "Pop" Jeng  
 7:00-7:30 p.m.: Culture  
 7:30-8:00 p.m.: Shaggy  
 8:00-10:00 p.m.: Steel Pulse  
 10:25 p.m.-11:25 p.m.: Third World  
**Sunday**  
 noon-1:00 p.m.: Children of the Diaspora, youth choir  
 1:00-2:30 p.m.: Gospel Choirs  
 2:45-3:30 p.m.: Thonetta Davis  
 4:00-4:45 p.m.: Detroit Road, featuring Jessica Moore  
 5:00-5:45 p.m.: Francisca More and the Amigo Jazz Allstars  
 6:00-6:45 p.m.: Vincent Cruz Peruvian Band  
 7:00-7:45 p.m.: KEM  
 8:00-9:00 p.m.: Straight Ahead  
 9:20-9:30 p.m.: Khary Krimani  
 9:30-10:00 p.m.: Donald Byrd

## The Detroit News

will feature bead strungers, above, along with various fashion designs, left. About 850 vendors, sculptures, jewelry and other artifacts. Nigerian native Phyllis Famb Sancho, who has attended the serving up about 100 pounds of rice per day with her authentic cuisine.

a third grade teacher made copies of the book that she thought would spur her students' interest in reading. "Some parents took offense to the reference of 'nappy' hair, without reading the book and embracing its message, which is a celebration of our hair, which is a gift from God that



The Detroit News he festival also features a step show, which highlights another African art form of dance and rhythms.

regiments strength," Herron said. Richard who loved my hair... my uncle told this story many times and I compiled the book to celebrate oral poetry. There is nothing inherently negative about the phrase 'nappy hair,' which is a black-on-black thing," said Herron, a professor at California State University at Chico. She also doubles as an epic poet and literary scholar. Herron will sell and autograph copies of her book *Nappy Hair* and which will go into distribution soon. The new book titled *Function at the Junction*, celebrates the author's love for Motor City and the nostalgic Motown Sound. "I fell in love with epics when I was a little girl and it has always been my goal to do African-American epics, so I travel throughout the country looking for stories to compile and show the beauty in African-American epic tradition," she said.



the Diaspora featuring the bogel, whip wop, reggae

**Cafe Diaspora**  
**Sunday**  
 7 p.m.: Soul Clique and Third Stone from the Sun  
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**Ujima Stage**  
**Saturday and Sunday**  
 9:00 An Urban Monument, Kcalib



Glow Spirit Artists Collective dancers  
 noon-9:00 p.m.: Poets, musicians and 1:00-4 p.m. and 6:00-10:00 p.m.: by appointment only, video taping of interviews with African American Auto industry workers  
**Kcalib Center Spirit Artists Collective**  
 Series I: Collaboration in the Artz/Next Millennium  
 Series II: The Relationship of the Artz & Community  
 Series III: Ogun: An Urban Monument dedicated to the spirit of the African American Auto Industrial Workers  
**Panthy Village**  
**Friday**  
 5:00-8:00 p.m.: Detroit Tigers Pitching Booth  
 5:00-7:00 p.m.: African Dance Performances and Instruction and Poetic Expressions-Open Mic Poetry  
**Arts & Crafts Tent**  
 5:00-7:00 p.m.: Face Painting  
 7:00-9:00 p.m.: Mural who Project  
**Saturday**  
 noon-7:00: WB20 Michigan  
 1: Bounes House  
 WB20 Dubba  
 Dunker  
 Detroit Tigers Pitching Booth  
**Performance Tent**  
 1:00-2:00 p.m.: Storytelling  
 3:00-4:30 p.m.: Traditions of Africa (workshop)  
 4:30-6:00 p.m.: African Dance Instruction  
 6:00-7:30 p.m.: "It's All About Words" - Open Mic Poetry  
 7:30-8:30 p.m.: Slaps Taps (beginners drumming)  
**Arts & Crafts Tent**  
 1:00-2:00 p.m.: Mural Project  
 2:00-3:00 p.m.: Face Painting  
 3:00-4:00 p.m.: African Games - Mancala  
 5:00-6:00 p.m.: Payer Masks



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